

September 1919. It was attended by the Division Peishkars and the Commissioner, Devicolum, the Chief Secretary to Government, the Conservator of Forests, the Director of Civil Supplies and the Director of Agriculture. A G. O. has since been issued indicating the lines on which action is proposed to be taken by the Government in pursuance of the resolutions arrived at in that conference, and it will be seen from that G. O. that every possible measure will be devised by the Government to extend the area of food-production in the State. In regard to the question of disafforestation, it will be well to bear in mind that compact areas more than a hundred acres in extent are not available anywhere for being conveniently thrown out for the cultivation of paddy without detriment to forest conservancy, and that in these circumstances all that the Government can do is only to consider each application for the registry of blocks within reserves as it comes up and dispose of it on the merits. The proposals now under consideration to register about 2,000 acres of land outside the reserves in the Devicolum Division at concessional rates, to pursue the investigation of the Adirapalli irrigation scheme, to take early steps for the registry of the *kari* lands near the Tottappalli lock and to throw open further areas from the backwaters for the cultivation of paddy, will, I hope, go an appreciable way towards the solution of the food problem in the State. It is also in contemplation to depute a senior officer of the Public Works Department to undertake a systematic investigation into the conditions of the sources of irrigation in the different parts of the country, with a view to enable the Government to take steady and sustained action in the matter of their restoration and upkeep. Apart from this general scheme, a committee, composed of officials and non-officials, has been appointed to enquire into and report on the improvement of the irrigation tanks in the Neyyattinkara taluk. Though, by these and other means, it may be possible to make a tangible addition to the area of paddy growth, there is no guarantee that the area will remain as such, and that the more commercially attractive crops such as cocoanut and rubber will not reduce even the available area with increasing rapidity as years advance. The only safe way out of the situation is to resort to intensive cultivation by the adoption of the improved methods demonstrated by the Agricultural Department. In the selection of seeds, application of manure, use of implements, and process of cultivation, the Department has valuable lessons to give and it is for the ryots concerned to profit by those lessons and prove to be of help to themselves and the country by showing that paddy is in no way less remunerative than cocoanut. In the Rules which are being framed under the Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans Regulation, IX of 1094, ample facilities will be afforded for the distribution of cheap credit for agricultural purposes. The Department will also demonstrate the scientific growth of leaf manure in the near future. Dr. Kunjan Pillai looks forward to a time when all the 2,00,000 acres of punja land in the country could be cultivated annually, and if this ideal which is to be so devoutly wished for is capable of even partial realisation, the Department will have just cause to congratulate itself on that achievement. The vernacular quarterly journal published by the Department has been converted into a monthly under the designation of 'The Travancore Economic Journal' and is now the common organ of the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries, Industries and Co-operation. Lands have been placed at the disposal of the Director of Agriculture for the purpose of opening fresh demonstration farms at Shencottah, Shertallay, Alwaye and Muvattupuzha, and it is in contemplation to extend the operations of the paddy farm at Nagercoil, and to open a fruit farm, a pepper farm, a cattle-breeding farm and a poultry farm in different parts of the country, besides starting an agricultural school at Alwaye. Steady progress has been made in the popularisation of sericulture as a cottage industry. Arrangements have been made for starting prawn culture as an experimental measure at Ayiramtengu near Kayankulam.

18. Statistics.—The Assistant Secretary to Government in charge of the Statistical Section in the General and Revenue Secretariat was deputed to Calcutta and Bangalore to study the methods of compilation of agricultural and other statistics. He has returned after training and is now engaged in compiling a volume of useful statistics for Travancore.